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ABSTRACT

A practicum was conducted to develop critical thinking and improve expression through creative written language utilizing precision teaching as an evaluation of student performance. Six students (grades second through sixth) with low idea generation and few organization skills were trained by three teachers and a teacher advisor using brainstorming techniques, plot diagramming, and story maps. Analysis of the writing samples revealed significant improvements when students were structurally trained. This verified the importance of a step-by-step educational approach for students with writing difficulties. Students learned to think more systematically and planned and organized thoughts as the stories were being written. (Four tables are included. Appendixes include: precision teaching semi-logarithm charts; task sheets; creative writing samples; learning methods--keycards, kina-writing, sensing stimulus, vocabulary game; teaching methods--story maps, diagramming, and webbing. Twenty-eight references are attached.) (MG)

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DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND IMPROVING EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING

by

HARRIET E. GOODMAN

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the
Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
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Abstract

Developing Critical Thinking Skills and Improving Expressive Language Through Creative Writing

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Many students do not give any thought to an organized writing plan when writing creatively. Writing is often just words on paper with little actual intention going into the process. This practicum focused on creative writing skills. Students with low idea generation and little organization skills were trained using brainstorming techniques, plot diagraming, and story maps.

The analysis of the writing samples revealed significant improvements when students were structurally trained. This verified the importance of a step-by-step educational approach for students with writing difficulties. Students learned to think more systematically and planned and organized thoughts as the stories were being written. Appendices include: precision teaching semi-logarithm charts; task sheets; creative writing samples; learning methods--keycards, kina-writing, sensing stimulus, vocabulary game; teaching methods--story maps, diagraming, webbing.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Harriet E. Goodman

Harriet E. Goodman

Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Authorship Statement	iii
Observer's Verification	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vii
Chapters	
I. Purpose	1
II. Research and Solution Strategy	7
III. Method	23
IV. Results	39
V. Recommendations	43
Reference List	46
Appendices	49
Appendix A: Precision Teaching Semi-Logarithm Charts	50
Appendix B: Task Sheets	54
Appendix C: Creative Writing Samples	58
Appendix D: Error Review Form	64
Appendix E: Learning Methods: Keycards	68

		Page
Appendix F:	Kina-Writing	75
Appendix G:	Sensing Stimulus	77
Appendix H:	Vocabulary Game	79
Appendix I:	Teaching Methods: Story Maps/ Diagraming/Webbing	81

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1:	Baseline Data	4
Table 2:	Cohesive Paragraph (Five-Minute Sample)	39
Table 3:	Descriptive Words (Five-Minute Sample)	40
Table 4:	Punctuation (Five-Minute Sample)	41

CHAPTER I

Purpose

The practicum was implemented in a county in the southeastern United States on the grounds of a private university. Parents brought their children to a remedial setting for one hour of instruction, twice weekly. Three teachers and a teacher advisor worked with the students. The writer was accountable for designing and implementing objectives for six students, including diagnosing academic needs, monitoring academic activities, and using precision teaching as a means to measure learning and proficiency of skills. The students involved in the practicum came from middle and upperclass families and ranged in grades from second through sixth.

Target Population

Donny, a sixth grader was able to process information simultaneously. This was a strength in math and music but not in phonics and spelling. The student had a verbal IQ of 111, a performance IQ of 105, and a full-scale IQ of 109 on the Wechsler

Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R). According to the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, the student had difficulty with sequential processing, revealing a reading cluster standard score of 85 and a percentile rank of 60. In contrast, on the math cluster, the score was 121. On the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude, a percentile rank of 50 revealed average performance on verbal tasks. A relative weakness was noted in the ability to identify and verbalize the opposite of a word.

Sara, a fifth-grade female, had a poor self-concept according to test results. WISC-R results indicated a verbal IQ of 82 with a performance IQ of 87 and a full scale of 84. Subtest scores included a 7 in Picture Completion and a 9 in Picture Arrangement. The results of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement showed spelling skills and sight vocabulary at or below third grade. Written language was scored at a 3.3 grade level and dictation was 2.6.

Jane, a fourth-grade female, had difficulty with visual tracking. According to the WISC-R, the student had a full scale IQ of 94 with a 4 in Object Assembly. Synthesizing concrete parts into meaningful wholes was

a weakness. The Bender-Gestalt Visual Motor Integration Test revealed an integration weakness at the 7-0 to 7-5 age range. The score was more than one standard deviation below the mean for her age level. The student had a significant deficit in perceiving and comprehending spatial relationships. The student tended to worry, was easily frustrated, and lacked self-confidence.

Chris, a fourth-grade male, was functioning below level according to the Woodcock-Johnson, scoring at the 10th percentile when compared to peers in oral and written expression. The Visual Aural Digit Span Test results included: Aural Written 10, Visual Written 25, and Written Expression 10-25. The student had a processing deficit and was significantly below level in concept formation. All of the program objectives on the county's minimum basic skills were not met.

Mike, a second-grade male, needed remediation in spelling, comprehension, and writing skills according to the minimum basic skills checklist. Other skill areas of concern were punctuation skills, sequencing of ideas, and organizing information.

Michael, another second-grade male, needed to improve spelling, punctuation, comprehension, and writing skills, according to the classroom teacher.

Baseline data was collected by administering one-minute timed samples of skills to obtain a precise measure of each of the six student's academic performance. After assessing the students' academic skills and reviewing previous test results, a need to improve the students' writing and organizational skills was evident.

Baseline data collection reveals the following scores:

Table 1

Baseline Data

Student	Skill	Baseline Correct/Errors	Criterin Per Minute
Jane	Writing/Structure	4/4	(5-minute
Mike	(topic sentence,	4/8	sample)
Chris	details,	6/6	10-15
Donny	conclusion)	5/5	sentences
Michael	Punctuation	9/1	15-18
Sara	(period, quotation	0/4	marks
Mike	marks, question marks)	2/0	
Donny	Adverbs and adjectives	3/15	15-20 words

Problem Identification

The students had definite learning strengths and weaknesses. Difficulties included an inability to organize thoughts, an inability to create a fluent sequential theme, run-on sentences without punctuation, and difficulty with spelling and elaboration of vocabulary skills. The students were unable to meet the suggested performance standards in relation to creative writing.

Writing requires thinking and analytical skills that underlie skillful performance in content area subjects. Students must develop basic writing ability and writing fluency. Students must be made aware of being the informants in a communicative context that includes writers and readers. The learners must understand that they are in charge of the writing process. This includes the thinking and organizational strategies associated with planning, organizing, drafting, editing, and final revising.

Outcome Objectives

After 16 weeks, given a stimulus picture or story starter, the student will be able to (a) write a cohesive story including a topic sentence, details, and

a conclusion as measured by precision teaching; (b) write a paragraph using 15 to 20 descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs) measured by precision teaching; and (c) correctly punctuate sentences in a paragraph, at a rate of 15 to 18 marks per timing, using a period, quotation marks, and question marks.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Research revealed the fact that to improve expression through written language, writing should be guided by some reflection and by some adherence to a plan, and not just words on paper. While the improvement of writing abilities and fluency is a very important part of a child's instructional program, even more important is the improvement of the students' ability to develop and communicate thoughts about a particular topic in an organized manner. Often students write ideas about a topic in any order which comes to mind.

Creative Writing/Critical Thinking

According to Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, Fear and Gregg (1987), special education students did not perform as well in the ability to maintain thinking about a topic as indicated by the length and quality of creative writings. The special education students' papers contained approximately one-half the number of ideas as those produced by normally achieving students.

The lower quality and quantity of writing suggested that problems might be due to specific difficulties in accessing and selecting relevant information about familiar topics and in organizing and revising those ideas to convey well-organized, clear writings. The difficulties are often in knowledge retrieval and organization. Two instructional conditions necessary for the development of basic writing ability and fluency that can help this writing problem would be for the student to write frequently and follow an organized plan.

Think Sheets

An important support system that Englert, et al. (1987) found useful in helping students write better, was the use of think sheets. Often the concern of the student is to get the words down on paper without thinking ahead of strategies as to how to approach the writing. Students have to be taught that as informants in the writing process, an audience will be reading the ideas that are being written down. The use of think sheets (planning, organizing, editing, peer editing, revising) take the place of mature organizational and thinking strategies. The planning think sheet helps

the writer think about the audience, purpose, and information about the topic. The organizing think sheet provides a specific guide, containing questions and key words associated with the specific text structure. The edit think sheet helps the writer to evaluate whether the text structure questions were answered and is intended to bring clarity to the composer. Peer editing think sheets help illuminate the audience as to the meaning of the paper. The writer and the peer editor can discuss the paper and decide how to upgrade the writing. The writer can then make the necessary changes. The teacher can help students improve writings by the modeling technique.

> Teachers teach students how to insert or change the order of information and give the rationale for changes. Teachers also help students monitor the papers for spelling and grammatical accuracy (Englert, et al., 1987:26).

The final draft think sheet is simply lined paper for the students to recopy the composition. The overall goal of the program is for students to internalize appropriate strategies and no longer need the think sheets for support.

Story Types

Bergenske (1987) reported that students should look at all the components of a story before writing essays. Students need to develop metacognitive knowledge. "Metacognition is our ability to plan a strategy for producing what information is needed, to be conscious of our own steps and strategies during the act of problem solving" (Costa, 1984:57). "It is important for students to select appropriate writing strategies as well as the ability to continually self-regulate and monitor test to detect comprehension breakdowns" (Englert, et al., 1988:19). Teachers should explain all the necessary elements in a story: (a) title, (b) setting, (c) characters, (d) problem--issue or trouble that needs to be overcome in the story, (e) goal--what the people in the story want to happen, (f) episodes--things that happen, and (g) resolution--how the issue or trouble was solved (how the goal was made to happen).

According to Barenbaum, Newcomer, and Nodine (1987), students' original written compositions can be classified with a category system that ranges from various types of non-stories to true stories:

expressive, description, action, sequence, primitive story, and story. A composition has to contain a beginning, middle, and ending, all related to one another, to be judged a story. A primitive story differed from a story in that it did not contain a conflict, problem, or complication, thereby lacking the more involved aspect of a story. A composition had to contain a series of events temporally arranged in order of occurrence, without a clear directing goal connecting the beginning and the end, to be judged an action sequence. To be judged a description, the writing either described a picture that accompanied the story, a setting for the story, or the main character. The final category, expressive, was writing that seemed to be just thoughts about a topic or free associations such as might appear in a journal or diary. There is no story line in the expressive category and no concern about communicating with a audience. According to Giordano (1984:82), "in order for students' writing to be effective, the students must perceive the fact that messages are being transmitted to a reader."

Story Webs/Semantic Maps

Teachers can use diagrams and pictures to illustrate the story elements. According to Bergenske

(1987), students need help defining story elements (e.g., a caterpillar has the title of the story on its back with each leg having part of the story elements; or a flower with the story title in the middle with each petal having the characters, setting, problem, resolutions, and goal episodes).

It is helpful for students to organize ideas by using a "map" according to Gemake and Sinatra (1986). Since students often do not know how to structure compositions, writings often lack sequence, order, and are unclear to read. Maps are used as prewriting activities that diagrammatically display how ideas in a text are organized. Configuration outlines help to hold ideas for writing and show how ideas are connected. Three kinds of maps can be used. The Sequence Map is used when ideas need to be organized in sequential order for writing. The Classification Map can be used when categories and examples have to be expanded with special details. The Description Map is used when special features and details are important.

Johnson (1988) presented ways to break down writing into four steps: brainstorming, organizing, writing the first draft, and revising. Clustering is

an effective method of brainstorming. Writers start with a nucleus word or phrase and then write down ideas and images that associate with that nucleus. Students can organize material into related groups by using a spoke outline. Each group of related material forms a spoke organized around a central hub, which is a statement of the purpose of the composition. For the first draft, students can do a 10-minute burst of writing without stopping to think or to worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Another technique for producing a first draft is to have students "talk out" papers one paragraph at a time. A revision checklist would be helpful using three areas: content (what is said), organization (the order in which it is said), and style (the way in which it is said).

"WH" Words

The creative writing paper can be developed by teaching how to use the words "who, what, where, when, why or how." Dickinson (1980) came to the conclusion that the best way to teach these special words was to look through the local paper and pick out stories and discuss how these words applied to the stories. The words "who, what, where, when, and why or how" were

printed on a brightly colored poster in large letters; and, as each student reviewed paragraphs in the paper, the special words were checked against the poster.

Generating Ideas

Gozzi (1987) suggested using magazine pictures to stimulate writing creatively. Teachers can use reproducibles with specific questions to get the students to start writing and thinking. Students need to analyze the picture before the writing begins. Since each student has a different interpretation of the same subject (depending on his elaboration and ability to describe details), originality will be communicated to the reader. Students are encouraged to choose funny pictures, frightening pictures, etc., and write the reasons for the choices. These writings can be shared with a peer, and that way, students will learn to articulate feelings, appreciate individual opinions and differences, and to question the content of a picture--any of which might lead to further discussion.

Dugan (1977) suggested using a picture as a basis for students to write creatively. The best pictures selected are ones that show action, thought, emotions,

beauty, friendship, animals, and nature. Having a large group of pictures for students to choose from makes creative writing personal and successful. A way to help students improve detailed description is by asking the students to think about the characters in a story (Kohl, 1981). How does the character walk? What does the voice sound like? Visualize the way the character eats. What makes the person unique? The characters become more real this way.

Starko (1989) reported a study on how professional writers and high school students generate ideas and select topics for writing. Relating objects to own lives or particular settings was a common strategy. Looking for unusual idea combinations, and viewing the ideas from another angle, were possibilities for elaboration.

> Creative writing can play a pivotal role in developing the self-awareness necessary for positive self-concept and subsequent self-actualization. The very immediacy of words on paper can clarify problems and needs quickly, personal development and change can be effected more readily. Writing can be a helpful instrument to develop self-awareness, by translating the self, in all its complexities, into written language (Kenny, 1987:33).

Grammatical Form

"The writing productivity of 13 fifth-grade remedial students was increased by sequentially reinforcing specific writing skills" (Brigham, Graubard, and Stans, 1985:27). Brown and Palincsar, as cited by Englert et al. (1988), suggested that the perfect educational plan would be a combination of specific skill teaching and metacognitive training, where the student self regulates the instruction.

According to Goette (1989), the students' independent writing can be used for diagnostic purposes, helping the teacher determine which particular words individual writers need to learn to spell, which grammar or punctuation skills need to be emphasized, whether the concept of sequence is understood, and whether questions are needed to encourage the use of descriptive language (e.g., Was the man old or young? What did the man's face look like?).

Nutter and Safran (1984) saw a need for methods to improve written language and developed a technique called "sentence combining exercises (SCE)." Students are given simple sentences on index cards to be joined

with other simple sentences. Students move the cards around to make grammatical correct combinations. SCE's are used to compose simple sentences using pupils' vocabulary or spelling words. Students can gain skill in identifying and using parts of speech.

An elaborative vocabulary-learning strategy is the keyword method. According to Mastropieri, Scruggs, and Fulk (199), this method was first described by Atkinson (1975:93) who stated, "the keyword method reconstructs unfamiliar verbal stimuli into acoustic representations, and elaborates the transformed stimlui with the response information." The keyword method is pictorial. Students can be provided with keywords and interactive pictures or make up interactive images. Students taught via the keyword method have been quite successful in learning vocabulary. Wood (1987) reported the use of keycards with students was a helpful strategy. Have the word "question" on one side of a card and then the back of the card might have "What time is it?" The front of the card could have the word "exclamation" with the "!" mark, the back of the card would have "Watch your step!" as example.

These cards can be used when students are to identify sentences.

Goodman, Cascirato, and Price (1987) used an error analysis worksheet to evaluate errors in a writing sample. The teacher numbers each line of the writer's sample, starting with the title. As the composition is read, all errors are noted and marked as to type on an error analysis worksheet. The type of error is designated across the top of the analysis worksheet, e.g., describing words, punctuation, capitalization, missing word, etc. Then a total count for each type of error is developed. This enables the teacher to pinpoint priority areas for remediation. An important aspect in becoming proficient in an academic task is self-assessment. Billingsley (1988) uses an Analysis Guide for scoring writing samples whereas students can evaluate writing products.

Precision Teaching

Grahm and Harris (1988) conducted a study associated with goal setting. Students choose the amount and type of vocabulary items that would be included in compositions. The students evaluated the success of meeting the goals by graphing the writing

performance after each writing session and established a new goal for the next writing assignment. This experience taught the student the importance of identifying goals, synthesizing information and then evaluating the progress of the performance. The results were dramatized through charts, graphs, and other means of public posting. In this way, the students were able to accurately monitor and evaluate progress.

The above study seems to be based on precision teaching which was developed in the mid 1960s by Dr. Ogden Lindsley, student of Dr. B. F. Skinner, founder of operant conditioning. "Operant conditioning is the process by which the frequency of occurrence of a behavior is modified by the consequences of the behavior itself" (Rawers, 1983:2).

> Precision teaching is a set of measurement procedures that focuses on direct and daily measurement of academic and social behavior. When applied to academic behavior, precision teaching involves breaking the learning task into meaningful components and directly measuring the students' speed, accuracy, and growth on the task. Based on this information, relevant and immediate teaching decisions can be made that assure the most effective day-to-day learning environment for the individual child. (Rawers, 1983:1)

A study, called the Sacajawea Plan, was conducted in the Central Oregon school districts using precision teaching (Rawers, 1983). Skills were subdivided into small component steps. A student's progress was assessed through daily, timed drills. Data from these drills were recorded and charted each day by the student and teacher to recognize immediately when there was a learning problem or when proficiency had been achieved. Students became problem solvers. Students compared daily performance with previous performance. Teachers were equipped with knowledge that could be used to make better informed curriculum and methods choices and adjustments, and stayed on task in terms of instructional sequencing. Continuous measurement enabled the teacher to communicate information more accurately to parents and administrators concerning student progress and problems. The project's developers concluded that the techniques produced statistically significant results and were helpful to special and regular education students regardless of economic level.

In precision teaching, each student is provided with a task sheet listing descriptive skills and

enabling activities that the student is expected to complete each day (Obrand, 1985). Along with this task sheet, the student has four to six objectives represented on logarithmic charts to record daily timed tests. This keeps the student motivated and excited working to try to beat the score from the previous session. Each student has an individual aim, or ending goal, usually expressed as a specific frequency range.

Conclusion

Creative writing is not separated by two distinct realms of thought as some students believe--free expression and grammatically correct writings: one, a means of self-expression and the other adhering to structural rules according to Lehr (1982). Creative writing needs to be grammatically correct and practical writing, such as a letter or report, needs to be interesting.

Students have difficulty with the beginning processes of written expression. What do the findings in the research suggest? According to Lambie (1986), it could be that (a) the student does not have ideas for composition; (b) the student does not have the organizational skills needed to begin writing; and/or

(c) the student has a poor imagination. The student might be having problems translating ideas onto paper due to difficulty concentrating while writing, or difficulty sequencing parts. The student may do a poor job of rewriting or editing because of (a) an inadequate vocabulary, (b) poor spelling, and (c) grammatical errors.

According to Miller (1988), self-assessment is very important for metacognitive growth. Giving students devices to self-monitor and self-assess during a task is a way students can become directly involved with their own academic progress.

An interesting result, discovered in examining the research, is that learning takes place when it is meaningful; students learn best when clear objectives are set and the teacher provides sequenced steps in acquiring knowledge.

CHAPTER III

Method

The goal of the practicum was to develop critical thinking and improve expression through creative written language utilizing precision teaching as an evaluation of student performance. To enable the researcher to evaluate the writings, the student was required to write a five-minute timed story corresponding with a student selected picture card. Every error was counted according to the Error Review form, to be discussed later on in this paper. The skills evaluated included: (a) a cohesive story including a topic sentence, details, and a conclusion; (b) descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs); and (c) punctuation (period, quotation marks, and question marks). Various teaching techniques and learning strategies were implemented while helping the students organize thoughts, create a more fluent sequential theme, write sentences with correct punctuation and use more elaborate vocabulary.

An additional goal was to improve the student's self-concept and the level of the student's academic capability.

Resources

Prior to implementation of the practicum, two inservice meetings were attended. The administrator discussed the components of the remedial program and provided student information, a resource manual, task sheet forms, semi-logarithmic charts, folders, and all the necessary information to start working with the students. A small room with many remedial activities was made available. The administrator provided test scores for some of the students. When this data was not available, the students' classroom teachers and parents were called to provide any needed information. On occasion, the classroom teacher sent special reports by way of the student. During the 16-week period, inservice trainings were held once a week to describe various techniques and methods utilized throughout the tutorial program.

Precision Teaching

Individualized academic probes were administered to the students to determine specific skill needs. These practice skill sheets helped to pinpoint the precise target for instruction. Each student had specific objectives to be mastered that were written

on semi-logarithmic charts in the form of learning statements; e.g., think-write sentences (Appendix A: 50). A long range goal, a unit of measure called frequency per minute, was established for each learner. A weekly goal, or aim, was expressed as a specific frequency. The students took part in predicting whether or not the weekly aims could be reached. The students were involved in a daily creative writing experience while being timed for five minutes. The performance was evaluated and the results recorded on the student's writing paper according to the specific objectives. The students, using learning lines, were taught to chart the results on semi-logarithmic charts. This performance data allowed the teacher to determine the learning that was taking place and provided a basis for decision making; e.g., Should the student continue working on the skill or does it need to be adapted either by "slicing" the skill into less complex components or setting a higher aim?

Each day the student was provided with a task sheet, complete with four to six learning objectives to be timed, and enabling activities focusing on teaching the particular objectives (Appendix B: 54).

Experimental Stage

Evaluations and testing took place, objectives and learning statements were formed, and baseline information from pretests were charted on the semi-logarithmic charts. When evaluating the initial writings of the students, the papers were systematically placed into categories according to student's writing needs to develop (a) sequence and organizational skills, (b) punctuation, and (c) elaboration of ideas. Some of the papers overlapped into more than one area. These writing skills were developed into learning objectives. The initial creative writing samples showed a lack in elaboration skills (Appendix C:58).

It was important to discover the best learning channel for the students--visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic? The specific channel was the area of concentration for the educational activities. When learning statements were written for the student, this area of concern was addressed.

Students learned to interpret a task sheet and evaluate creative writing using an Error Review form (Appendix D:64). Daily learning lines were marked on

the semi-logarithmic charts. Progress was continually determined by the teacher and students. How much progress was being made? Which objectives needed further remediation? Some objectives were met quickly and the student needed to be pushed ahead to a higher, more complex learning task. Other learning objectives had to be stepped back to an easier task, while still others had to be sliced way back to a simpler skill. The task sheets were set up for 8 to 12 activities. There were from four to six daily timed tasks and an enabling activity to be practiced.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies curriculum was introduced as a means of instruction that helped the student be more independent. This was useful when the student had to apply information learned in a more general way. According to strategy training by Deschler, as cited by Obrand (1985), instruction is provided as (a) student takes in information; (b) student organizes, stores, and retrieves information; and (c) student expresses what was learned. Metacognitive understanding was an important part of writing creatively. The students showed an increasing awareness in the steps needed in

arranging and planning ideas which resulted in better idea generation. The stories were upgraded in both length and fluency.

Learning Materials/Application

The main focus of the practicum was applying different learning tasks to help the students gain proficiency in the academic performance. Fluency building was a major area of concern. A variety of enabling activities were given to the student to make learning skills more fun, interesting, and educational.

Keycards

Keycards were utilized as an important metacognitive aspect in writing creatively (Appendix E:68).

1. Keycards for comprehension: The words "who, what, where, when, and why" were put on index cards by the students with pictures that related to each word; for example: who--people; what--things; where--places; when--time; and why--explains. The students were taught how to use the words "who, what, where, when, and why" to help develop ideas. The comprehension keycards were used as a enabling activity before the

timed writing task. The students would read a keycard and then brainstorm (as a group or individually) the who, what, where, when, and why questions concerning the picture that was to be written about. This enabled the students to be more informative when writing creatively.

2. Keycards for punctuation: The punctuation mark was on a card with a pictorial representation of the word. The period was associated with a stop sign. Sentences using a period were also on the card (Appendix E:68). A picture of people at a fork in the road represented the question mark. Pictures of people talking represented the quotation marks.

3. Keycards for grammar: The adjective keycard contained the information that adjectives describe the noun. On the card was a picture of a basket of flowers with words describing the representation. The student became familiar with the words used as descriptors on the card (Appendix E:68). Adverbs tell about a verb, adjective, or adverb. On the adverb card were the questions how, when, and where. These cards were used to teach the student to be more descriptive when composing a story. "Too," "very," and words that

ended in "ly," added to the students' store of adverb knowledge and were written on the keycard.

Brogy was a commercial learning activity that was used to demonstrate how sentences are put together. Students chose vocabulary cards to put in an orderly sentence, using multiple word cards in the categories of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

Kina-Writing

Kina-writing helped students read, spell, and understand the meaning of vocabulary words (Appendix F:75). Using a 4 1/2" x 11" strip of white tagboard and a marking pen, a word was printed that the student needed to conceptualize and recall. The student traced the word with a crayon. A meaningful picture was then drawn on the back of the tagboard with the student answering the questions who, what, where, or why, for exactness in understanding the word. Original letters of the word were connected, using a crayon, so the word looked like it was written in cursive. The word was then traced three times with a crayon, while the student repeated the word out loud. The word was then written on the chalkboard while the student had eyes closed. If the word was incorrect, it was then

retraced. The words were placed in a shoe box in ABC order. These cards were used as flash cards.

Sensing Stimulus

The senses were used to describe a person, place, or thing. Sight--how does it look? Hearing--how does it sound? Touch--how does it feel? How does it smell and taste? The students used descriptive words to fill in the spaces on this learning activity (Appendix G: 77).

Vocabulary Game

A vocabulary game was played by using two wheels--a smaller wheel and larger wheel--which were matched to synonyms on the outside of each circle. The student matched as many words as possible (Appendix H: 79).

Think Sheets, Story Maps, and Webbing

The students' writings lacked sequence and a sense of order. The ideas needed for the writings did not come easy to the students. The strategies of think sheets, story maps, and webbing were analyzed for coherence and a combination of these methods was adapted to use with the students. Self-questioning

was taught. Students chose picture cards that had appeal for writing a story. Students were given a story map (Appendix I:81). Before any timed writing took place, the students answered the questions and completed the information that was asked on the story map including a title, the characters, setting, the problem, sequenced events, and a resolution.

Students were not sure how to develop writings to include a topic sentence, beginning, middle, and ending ideas in sequence. Story maps were not being utilized correctly. Enabling activities were developed to help teach this skill further. The students and the teacher brainstormed together. There was a discussion about the picture before the writing began. A source of inspiration was the cluster method. This was done by looking at the picture, thinking about it, and then developing ideas compatible with the photograph. One word or phrase was chosen as a kernal or spark for other associated concepts or images. The ideas were clustered around the seed or word phrase as a main focus (Appendix I:81).

Diagraming was an enabling activity developed as a method of planning. The student created a story after

being given a diagram of a daisy with blank spaces on each petal and a center blank space. The title of the story was put in the middle of the flower, and elements of the story were put on the outside petals (Appendix I:81). A diagram of a caterpillar was also used. The story title was placed on the back of the caterpillar, and students filled in the blanks on the legs for different parts of the story (Appendix I:81). This enabled the students to focus on the story elements. Questions were answered, such as: "What do you see when looking at this picture?" "What is going on in the picture?" "Who are the people, or characters, in the picture?" "Do you see a problem or situation that is occurring in this picture?" "What happened first, second, third?" This helped clarify the thoughts of the student and there was a chance to verbalize the pictorial representation. The student became more involved with the sequencing aspect of the writing. The students then rewrote the whole story with many ideas already in place in the mind.

Creative Writing/Cohesive Story

The students moved from all the enabling activities to actually writing stories. The routine

was to have a two-minute discussion on the topic sentence before the writing took place. This provided the student with a clearer awareness for the flow of ideas.

When the writing sample was completed, it was read aloud to the teacher and fellow students. Sharing the creative writing was a form of story telling. Ideas were clarified in this way. Listening to written language helped students to locate sentences that were fragmented, words that were omitted, and unclear messages. Questions were answered by the student. What was the topic sentence? What were the details that supported the main idea of the story? Then a discussion followed with a quick review of whether the story had an ending or conclusion. Using the Error Review form, a plus (+) was given for a topic sentence. A minimum of three sentences were needed to support the main idea for a plus (+) in the detail category. The concluding sentence pulled the story together for another plus (+) on the Error Review form. Sentences in the writing sample were counted with a sentence subtracted for each minus in the cohesive story section on the Error Review. Most students had not had much

practice evaluating writings so the teacher demonstrated the cohesive process. The number of sentences were counted and charted by the student according to precision teaching.

Punctuation

Punctuation skills were taught with posters, modeling, keycards, electronic games, worksheets, and language exercises. For practice, converstaions with families were used. Where are the white socks? What is for dinner tonight? What time are we having lunch? If an answer was needed, the students were to use a question mark. Students wrote conversations with families to practice marking off quotation marks. When someone was speaking, it was important to emphasize this fact in writing by marking the words in a special way. Exact words that characters spoke were marked off. The students created language for people in pictures and wrote this verbage down on paper as practice; e.g., the boy said, "I want to go to the library to take out some books."

Punctuation marks were reviewed using the keycards before the timed practice. The students wrote creatively for five minutes. When the story was

completed, it was read to the teacher and other students. Students had to count quotation marks, questions marks, and periods at the end of sentences. An error monitoring strategy utilized was COPS. This is an acronym for capitals, overall appearance, punctuation, and spelling. First letter of a sentence, names of months, days, holidays, names of special places, titles, and personal names were all counted for correct use of capitalization. The punctuation marks were counted by the student. Line by line the student evaluated the writing sample by marking the specific points on the Error Review form. The teacher gave the paper a final check before the information was applied to the semi-logarithmic chart.

Descriptive Words

Different enabling activities were used as a means to teach adjectives and adverbs or describing words. Comparing similar and different objects was an effective enabling activity. Describing what a room looked like, using all the senses, was another task worked on.

Worksheets using objects that needed descriptors to complete the task were used to help elaborate on

writings. Rewriting sentences, filling in space for an adjective and adverb was a helpful task. Word cards were matched to create interesting sentences. The language master was used to describe objects and then to listen to the description to reinforce the use of elaborative vocabulary. The vocabulary game and the sensing stimulus, discussed earlier, were two activities that were enjoyable learning tasks.

The student's evaluation of the writing sample involved taking a close look at the keycards and making a decision as to the content of the writings. Donny read the story to the teacher and peers. The story was read a second time, line by line, marking adjectives and adverbs. The descriptive word count was then marked on the Error Review form. The exact number of describing words were then indicated on the semi-logarithmic chart.

Conferences

An evaluative report was written on each student with test results, comments on the progress made, and observations on the student. Parent conferences were held to discuss how the student performed in the tutorial situation. At that time, recommendations

and decisions were made as to whether the student would continue for the next eight-week period.

Students learned that writing has a meaning and purpose to enlighten, delight, and express feelings or beliefs. Some of the writings were humorous, serious, silly, meaningful, or outrageous. Stories were shared with other students and hung up in the classroom if the student showed progress in the writing process or the story idea was particularly good or entertaining. The students were learning how to be more fluent, sequence ideas, and express themselves to present creative writings that were fun and effective.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The obtained results indicated that there was significant improvement in the progress of most of the students after using a definite structured writing plan. The advancement was seen weekly by the students and writer on the semi-logarithmic charts.

Objective 1 - Cohesive Paragraph

Table 2

Cohesive Paragraph (Five-Minute Sample)

Student	Baseline Correct/Errors	Posttest Correct/Errors	Criteria
Jane	4/4	10/0	10-15 sentences
Mike	4/8	10/0	
Chris	6/6	12/0	
Donny	5/5	10/0	

All four of the students showed development in the area of cohesive story writing. Jane, Mike, and Donny were at the lower end of the frequency range and Chris was in the lower middle range. Before the training, the students had a good deal of difficulty with idea

generation, keeping the writing moving fluently and in a sequenced manner, and staying on the topic. Discussions concerning where the story took place, who the characters were, and what the problem situation in the story was, helped to clarify the writing so the student had a blueprint for the creative writing passage. An electronic game that lit up with the right answer was a favorite enabling activity for furthering skills such as main idea, drawing conclusions, making inferences, and vocabulary development.

The most successful tool was the story map. This was a concrete form of support. The student could visualize what the story had to consist of by answering all the information on the story map. The pattern was there for the student to fill in the extra space by elaborating on the existing information.

Objective 2 - Descriptive Words

Table 3

Descriptive Words (Five-Minute Sample)

Student	Baseline Correct/Errors	Posttest Correct/Errors	Criteria
Donny	3/15	23/0	15-20 words

When Donny wrote for baseline, production of descriptive words was very low. This was an area of writing that Donny had not given any thought to. Subsequently, the baseline writing was without many vivid details. After teaching this skill, Donny was able to evaluate and reflect productivity while writing creatively, and descriptive language improved immensely. Various worksheets were used as enabling activities. One effective activity had the student pretend to be blindfolded and describe various persons, places, or things according to feel, smell, taste, or sound. Donny was very proud of the picturesque language that developed and became quite good at using words. Keycards were an excellent learning activity, which were referred to as needed.

Objective 3 - Punctuation

Table 4

Punctuation (Five-Minute Sample)

Student	Baseline Correct/Errors	Posttest Correct/Errors	Criteria
Michael	9/1	16/0	15-18
Sara	0/4	8/7	marks
Mike	2/0	20/0	

Michael and Mike showed a great improvement in using punctuation marks. Sara did not do as well as the other two students. Sara was going through some personal problems at home. This information was brought to the writer's attention by the student's mother. Punctuation skills were taught with stimulating activities. Colorful cartoon practice cards assisted with capitalization and punctuation. Keycards were quite helpful when teaching the student how to use the different punctuation marks. Punctuation posters were another useful instrument.

Discussion

The initial premise of this study was that students having difficulty in creative writing needed to learn a way to organize thoughts, be more fluent and expressive, and be able to punctuate sentences to create more meaning for the reader. Critical thinking and reasoning skills were developed in the students enabling them to think, plan, and elaborate writings that were fun and enjoyable to read. The students' self-concepts improved through successful academic achievement.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

There are specific steps to be taken when teaching students to develop critical thinking skills and improve expressive language through writing creatively.

1. Give students goals and a plan to focus on during the composing process.

2. Use a measure (e.g., error review chart) that the student can get immediate feedback from and can evaluate own work.

3. Give the student some form of structure before the writing is to take place. Use of a blueprint is necessary when building a house; the use of an idea worksheet is necessary until maturity in writing develops. The use of story maps, diagraming, and brainstorming help to generate ideas.

4. Understanding that the purpose of writing is to communicate and express oneself to another will help in the organization and sequencing of sharing information.

Significant differences were found with the story length when the metacognitive strategy was employed

in this training. Before developing special techniques, the students had difficulty accessing ideas. These findings appear to support the strategies used. Verbal rehearsal was beneficial in gaining skillfulness when developing expression and organizational structure. When students were given time to think about stories to be written, and required to answer questions in a specific sequence using the story map and other brainstorming activities, the quality of the stories improved immensely (Appendix B: 54).

It is recommended that students be given a systematic way to approach, organize, and structure creative writing. Since the performance of the target population substantially improved, it shows how efficient strategies are needed with students just starting to write. In terms of story development, Jane ran out of time and could not conclude the story in a meaningful way when the story map or another diagraming tool was not used. The planned structured activity organized the writing beforehand. All that was needed was for the story to be put together.

The results can be generalized with all beginning writers. When students give more thought to writing, direction is emphasized. With metacognitive planning, the student has reached agreement within for the direction that the writing is being taken on the outside. This results in higher quality story writing.

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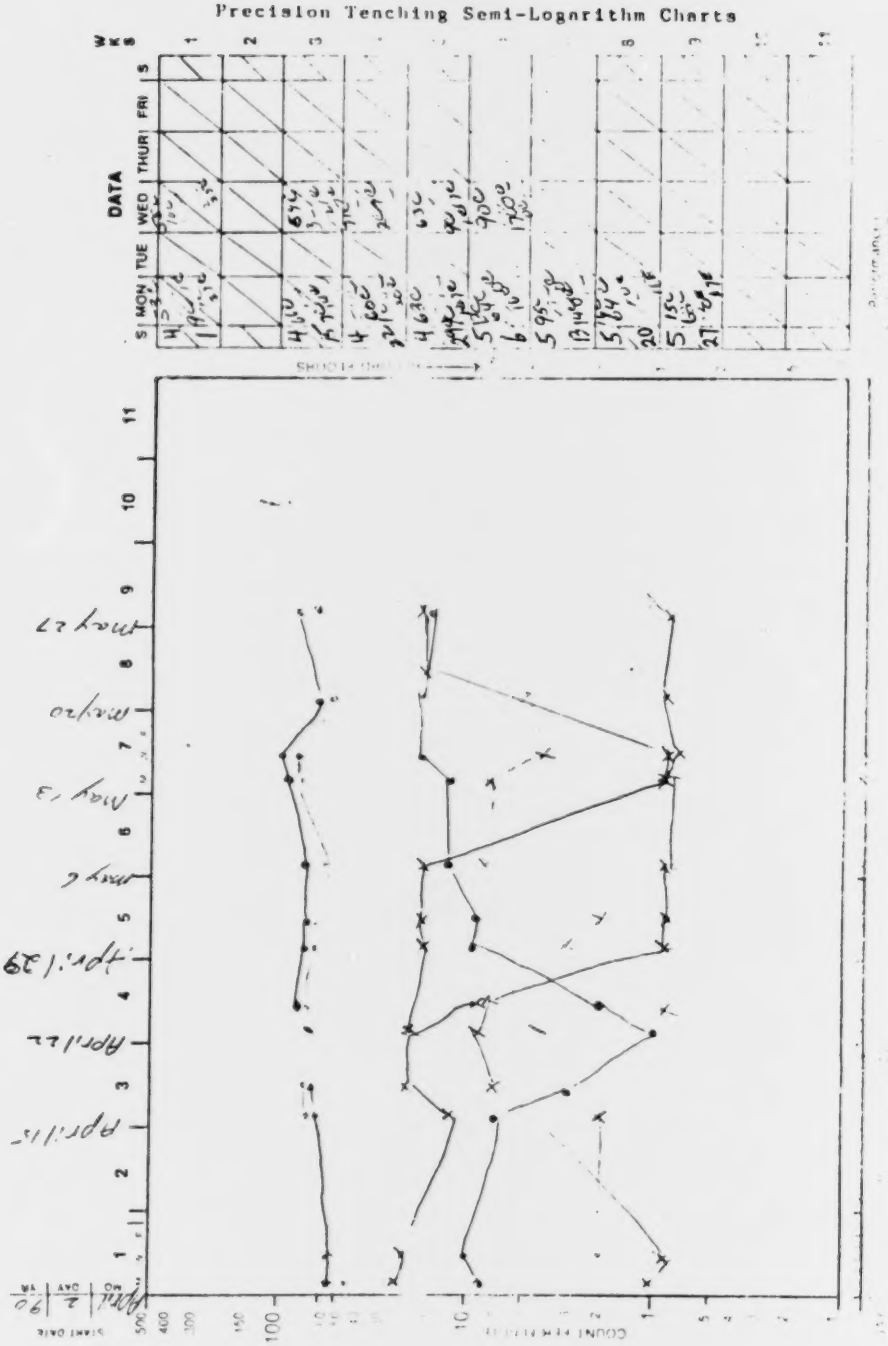
Appendices

Appendix A

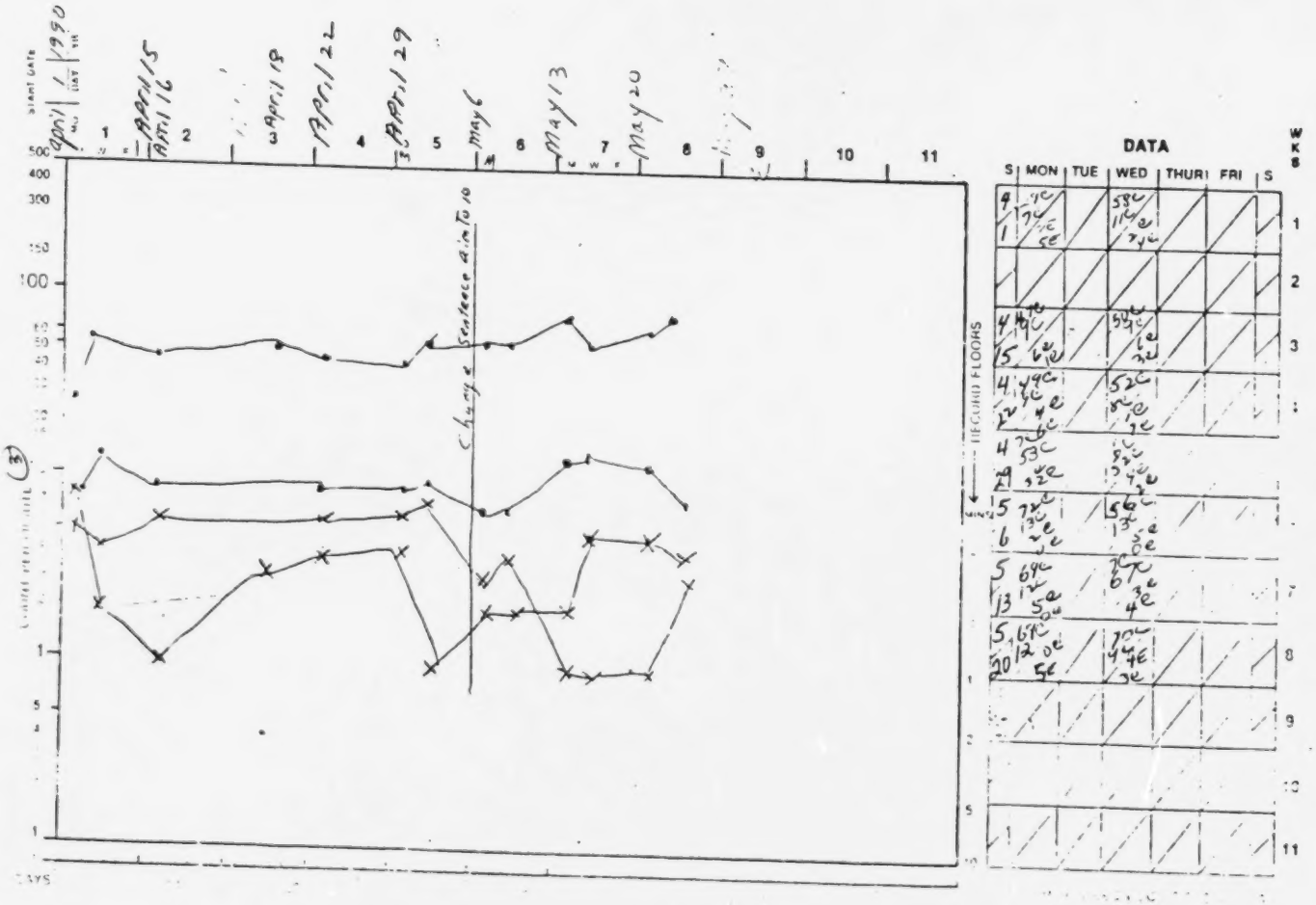
Precision Teaching Semi-Logarithmic Charts

Appendix A

Precision Teaching Semi-Logarithm Charts



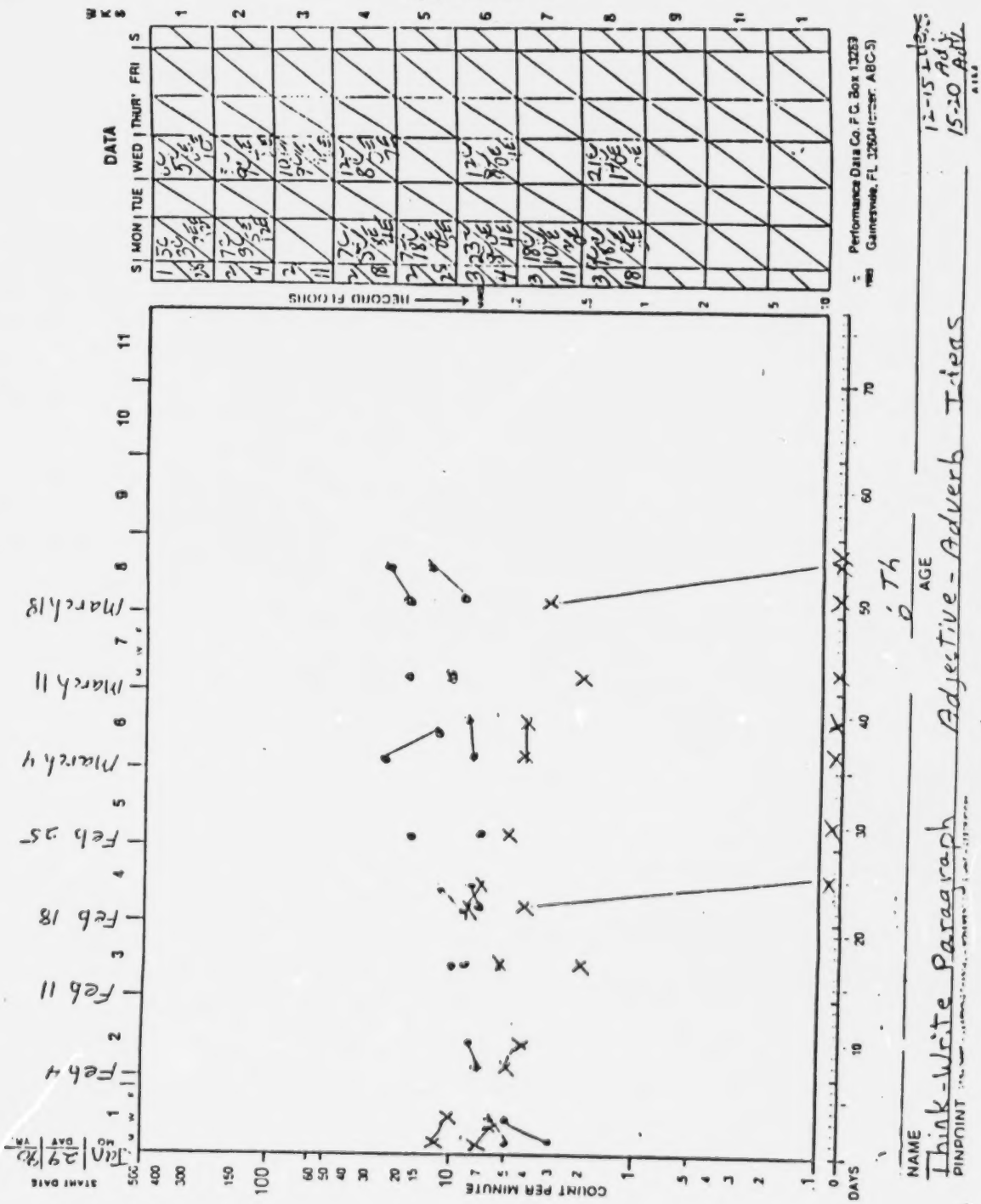
Michael Amatangelo
Sec. picture-write STORY - Period - Question marks Capitals 15-18 marks
2nd 40-100 words
Words -



NAME
Think-Write Paragraph — 4th grade
-Spelling
-Sentences - Ideas

79 correct
10-15- sentences

Appendix A


DATA
S | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | S
WKS
RECORD FLOOR
Performance Data Co. P.O. Box 13253
Gainesville, FL 32604 (Inter. ABC-5)
COUNT PER MINUTE
DAYS
AGE
NAME
Think-Write Paragraph
PINPOINT
Adjective-Adverb Ideas
12-15 Adj.
15-20 Adv.
Jan
Feb 4
Feb 11
Feb 18
Feb 25
March 4
March 11
March 18

Appendix B

Task Sheets

Appendix B

Task Sheets

TODAY THINGS TO DO

Date _____ Done

1 Versatiles - Synonyms
Supportive skill series

☆ 2 See Work - mark analogy Unit #4

3 Story Map
Aim #12-15 ideas

☆ 4 Think-write paragraph - + 20 adjectives adverbs

5 Kit III inference
Barnel left E Aim 19

☆ 6 See passage - mark Inference

7 Nim reading
Aim - 145

☆ 8 See story read - Catch the Wind

9 Kina Writing

10 Spelling - Hear-write words

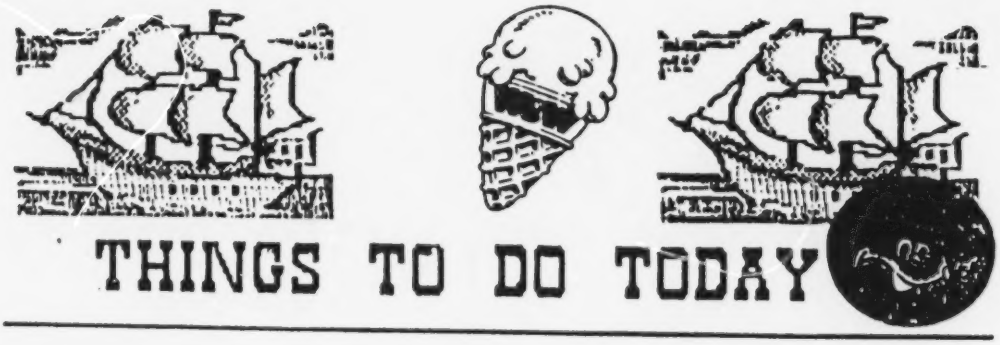
11 DLM adjectives
Aim 7 words Descriptive words

☆ 12 Expressive Writing - "about

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PRECISION TEACHING PROJECT
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Appendix B

Task Sheets



THINGS TO DO TODAY

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. Rewrite Monday's story
2. ★ See picture - write story — words w/ mastered spelling
3. Num
4. ★ See - story - read — Aim - 139 — Mirrors and Images
5. Frank Schaffer — #7, 8 — Main Idea
6. ★ See passage - mark main idea — Barnell loft — Aim - 4 — Level B
7. "Problem Solve" worksheet
8. ★ See problem - solve — Aim 5C
9. Step board (missing letters)
10. ★ See say cvvc (vowel combinations) — Aim - 47C
11. Kinn writing
12. ★ Think write - Describing words — "About" — Aim 8C
13. _____

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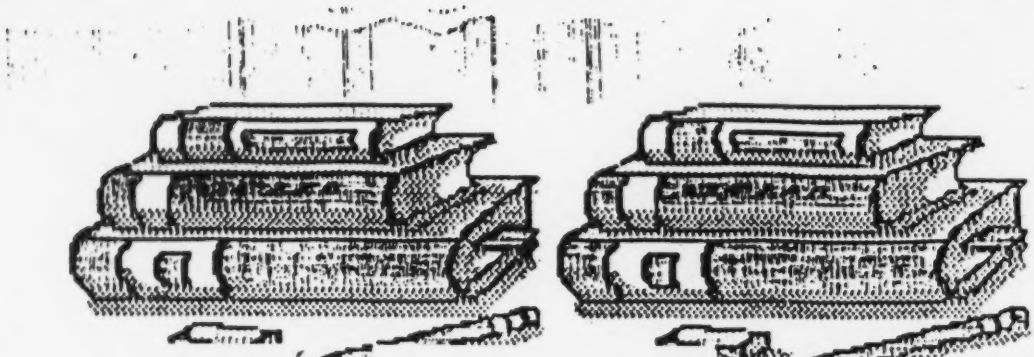
Appendix B

Task Sheets



TODAY THINGS TO DO

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. Vocabulary Development - Cards #3 + 4 ✓
2. ★ See Passage - Mark response Multiple skills D-1 Aim - 5c ✓ Unit 4
3. Versa-tiles - Synonyms ✓
4. ★ See-Say sight words Rhymes + Cursive Aim - 38c ✓ change to influence e
5. Skill booster - following directions ✓
6. ★ See-Passage-Mark response - Direction Aim - 5 Count Level D Following ✓ Unit 4
7. Language Master - Spelling Words ✓
8. ★ Hear-Write Dictated Spelling words - Aim - 55c ✓
9. Story Map ✓ Keep writing for
10. ★ Think-write paragraph Aim - spelling - 69c Sentences - 8c ○
11. Link Letters - bravest happier finest brightest ✓
12. ★ Think-write - "About" Describing words Aim - 11 words ✓
13. ✓

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Appendix C

Creative Writing Samples

Appendix C

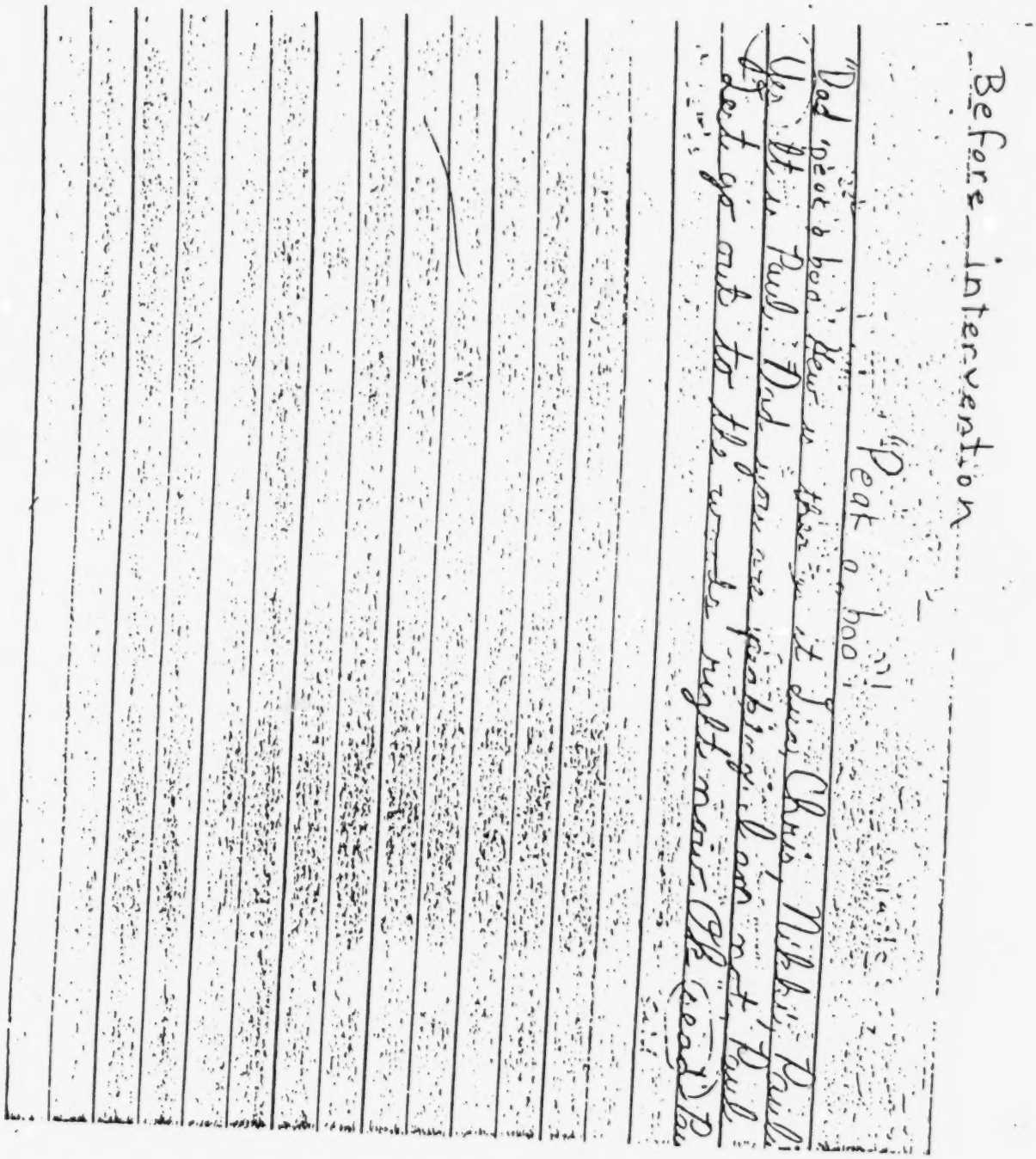
Creative Writing Samples

Super Marks

Super Marks is a place wear you learn. If you want to go call "1-800-444-444". You can learn in "5 day". You go for 2 weeks. If yan don't learn you get your money back. "Super Marks is the place to be! Comeh-eare and learn good or money back.

Appendix C

Creative Writing Samples


Before intervention
Peek a boo
Dad peek a boo
Dad peek a boo is the first time
Chris, Nikki, Paul
Yes it is Paul. Dad you are reading
I can not, Paul
Dad go out to the woods right now
Read

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Appendix C

Objective a)

In the egg

T. S. "I am getting out." "I am getting out" OOO yes I am

Details

1 out. I am sleepy. I am
2 going to take a nap.
3 5 min. latter he wakeup.
4 "My tooth is not off"!
5, 6 I won't it off." 2 day latter.
7 "My tooth is off." I am
8 soo happy, Now all

Conclusion

I have to do is grow up!"

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objective b

Appendix C

1.

THE COLD POOL

John and June are going to the swimming pool. When they get there June takes off her blue, red, green, and yellow clothes. She has a red and green bathing suit. She is at the end and is afraid to dive in. John goes on the diving board and pushes her in. The water is very cold. She jumps out and hands for a towel. Then she gets on her blue, red, green, and yellow clothes and then she goes home. At home she calls John at the swimming pool and tells him to come home.

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Objective C

Appendix C

The dide chell

One day there was a boy he went to the beach and found a chell. He did not like the colar of it. So when he got home he dide the chell. His mother helped him die it. He dide it turqeise and then he was happy. But the most thing of all was he had a good trip.

The End

Appendix D

Error Review Form

Appendix D

Error Review Form

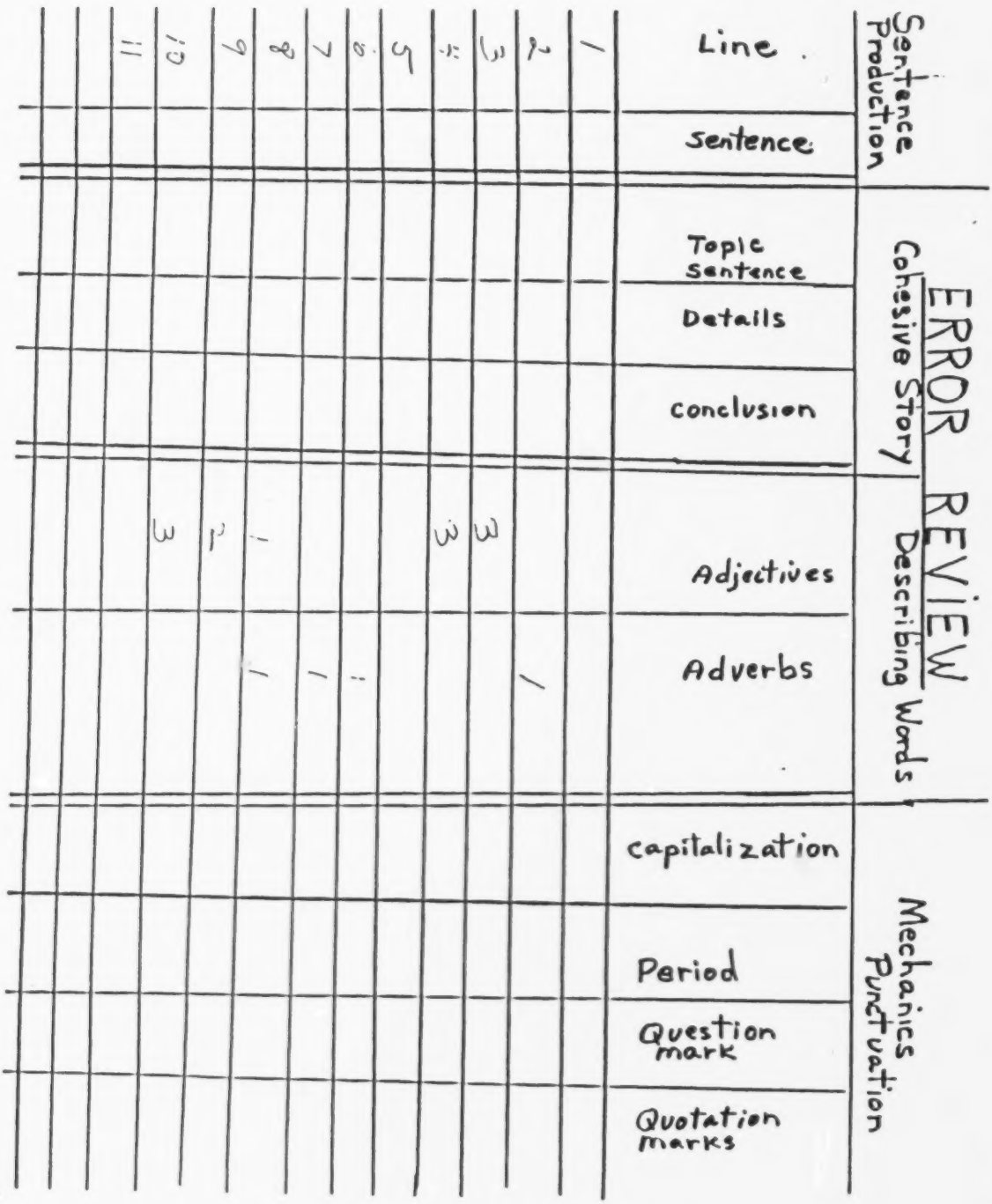
objective a)

ERROR REVIEW

Sentence Production		Cohesive Story			Describing Words		Mechanics Punctuation			
Line	Sentence	Topic Sentance	Details	Conclusion	Adjectives	Adverbs	capitalization	Period	Question mark	Quotation marks
1		+	+	+						
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										1
11										
12	✓									

Appendix D

Error Review Form



object b

Appendix D

Error Review Form

Objective C

ERROR REVIEW

Line	Sentence Production: Sentence	Cohesive Story: Topic Sentence	Cohesive Story: Details	Cohesive Story: conclusion	Describing Words: Adjectives	Describing Words: Adverbs	Mechanics Punctuation: capitalization	Mechanics Punctuation: Period	Mechanics Punctuation: Question mark	Mechanics Punctuation: Quotation marks
1							1 1			
2							1			
3										
4							1	1		
5								1		
6										
7							1	1		
8							1	1		
9										
10							1	1		
11								1		

Appendix E

Learning Methods: Keycards

WHO People
boy
Girl
she
He
They
What Things
Book

WHERE Places
Home
City
Floride
under

WHEN Time
night
Winter

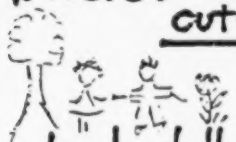
WHY - Explains.
Because we are hungry
We catch fish to eat.
Due To The Traffic sign
STOP
We must STOP the car
Since The plane is ringing
Ring
we answer it.

adverbs tell

how? The boy rides his bike carefully.

When? The girl left early

Where? The children went outside.



Other adverbs: Too ... very
words ending in LY

adverbs tell about a verb, adjective, adverb

A Pretty basket of flowers

Adjectives
Colorful
lovely
red
Small
blooming

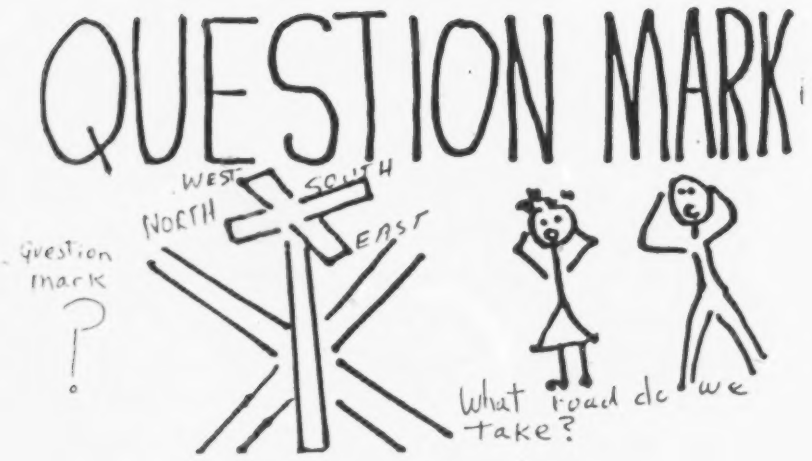
Too
very
are adjectives

A Large basket of flowers.
noun
Person, Place, Thing

Adjectives describe the noun.

Appendix E

Learning Methods: Keycards



Appendix E

Learning Methods: Keycards

Appendix F

Kina-Writing

Understand

Kina Card - Front + Back

I — you

86

87

Appendix G

Sensing Stimulus

Appendix G

Sensing Stimulus

Pretend you are blindfolded. Tell how the following things feel, smell, taste, or sound. Fill in as many blanks as you can.

	Feel	Smell	Taste	Sound
1. Ocean	rough	———	salty	mean
2. Broccoli	slushy	sweat	terrific	mushy
3. Roller coaster	smooth	sweetly	———	loud
4. Fried chicken	hard	terrific	crunchy	crunchy
5. Winter	soft	———	———	windy
6. Strawberry	bumby	tasley	mushy	———
7. Firecrackers	stingy	cherry	———	cracky

Appendix H

Vocabulary Game

Appendix H

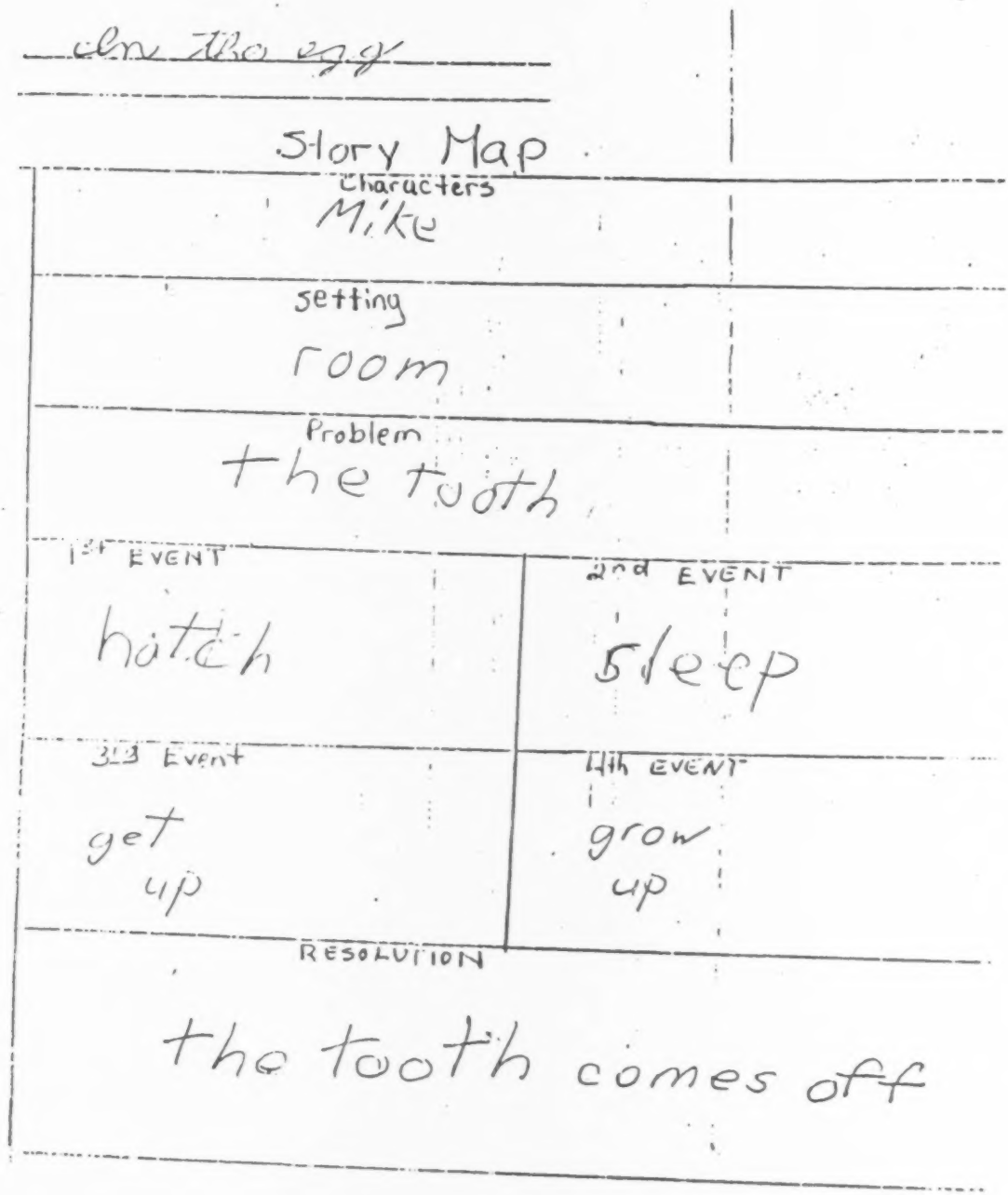
Vocabulary Game

Appendix I

Teaching Methods: Story Maps/ Diagraming/Webbing

Appendix I

objective a)



Objective b

Appendix I

THE COLD POOL

Story Map

Characters

June, John

Setting

THE POOL

Problem

SHE'S AFRAID TO DIVE IN.

1st EVENT	2nd EVENT
SHE GOES TO THE POOL.	SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DIVE IN.
3rd Event	4th EVENT
SHE JUMPS IN AND IT IS COLD	SHE GETS OUT AND DRYS OFF.

RESOLUTION

SHE DIVES IN.

Objective C

Appendix I

The dide chell

Story Map

Characters

chell

setting

beach

Problem

wrong colar

1st EVENT

the boy found a chell

2nd EVENT

but it was the wrong colar drown he did not like drown

3rd Event

when he got home he dide it turquoise

4th EVENT

then he was happy.

RESOLUTION

He had a good trip

The Dancing Bear
Author
Jane
Setting
Circus
Characters
Bear
Mike
Problem
Bear will not do his act.
Episodes
Bear dresses like a girl
Bear has a cold.
Resolution
Takes dress off and does act.

The Dancing Bear

Once there was a boy named Mike who ran a circus. Mikes best act was the dancing bear. One day the bear had a cat and hat a red nose. The next day he came out with a girls dress on. Mike said "Bear why do you have that on" I have it on because I have a cold and my nose is red.

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Appendix I

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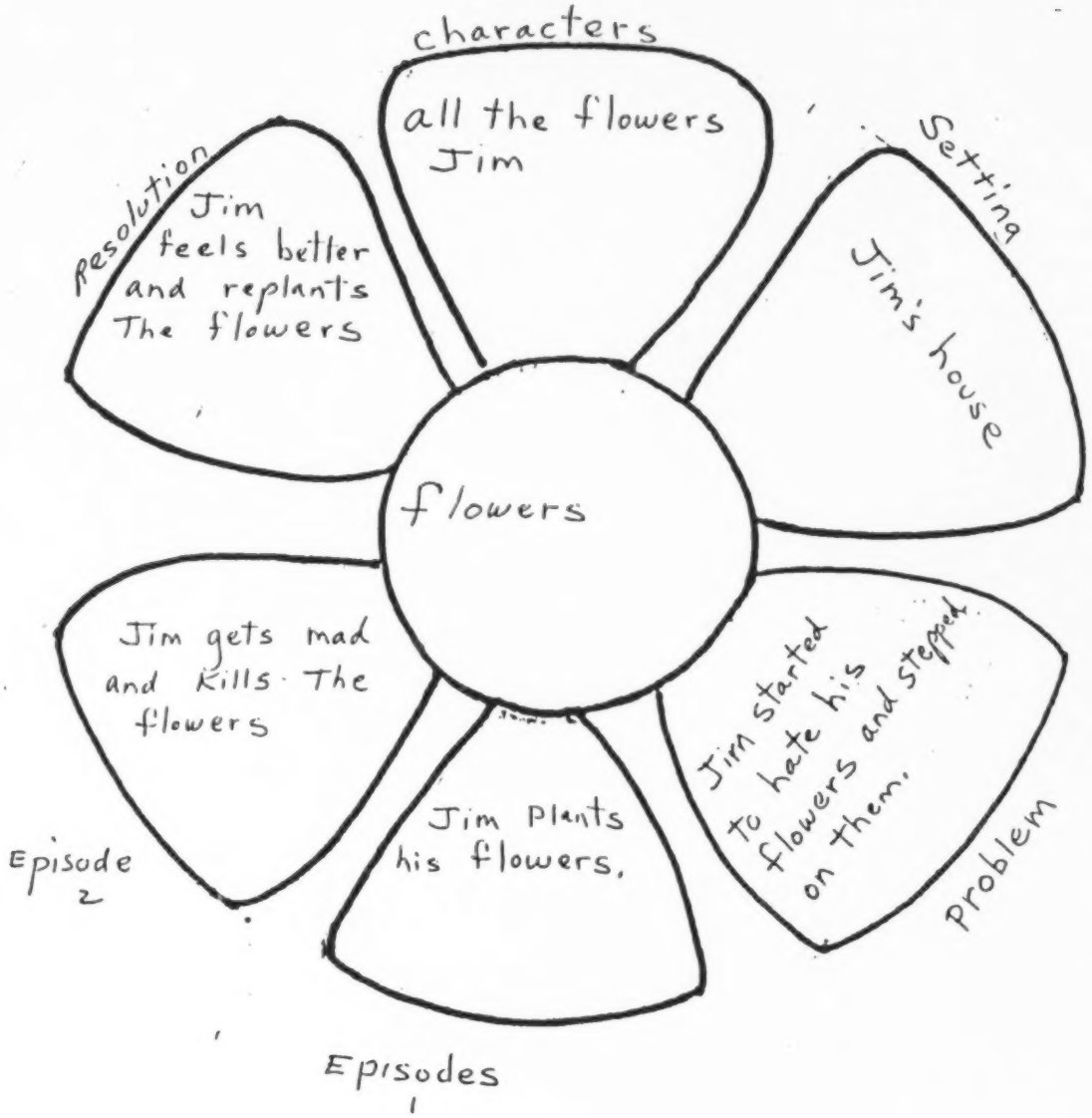
Appendix I


characters
all the flowers
Jim
Setting
Jim's house
problem
Jim started to hate his flowers and stepped on them.
Episodes
1
Jim Plants his flowers.
Episode
2
Jim gets mad and Kills The flowers
Resolution
Jim feels better and replants The flowers
flowers

One day Jim decided to plant a lot of flowers in his garden. Jim very much loved his flowers and he took very good care of them he feed them water them he love them very much. One day on a Sunday Jim had a big fight with is mom. Jim was so mad he started to kill his flowers. After two days Jim started to replant his flowers and he was so happy.

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